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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y -- ADDING ADDEE (SECDEF WASHDC)

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: 2008 NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY

¶1. (U) Summary and action request: the Secretary of Defense has released the 2008 National Defense Strategy (NDS). This cable provides general background on the NDS to assist posts in responding to host nation questions. Please pass this cable to the Department Of Defense (DoD) representatives at post.

¶2. (U) The unclassified 2008 National Defense Strategy (NDS) has been released. Defense Secretary Robert Gates discussed the NDS in a press conference on July 31; his remarks and an electronic copy of the strategy are available on the DoD website (www.defenselink.mil).

¶3. (U) The NDS is the Department of Defense's capstone strategy document. It presents the Secretary of Defense's vision of how DoD will implement the President's National Security Strategy and respond to the security challenges of today and the future. The NDS builds on the 2005 NDS and the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review reflecting lessons learned in ongoing operations.

¶4. (U) Key themes from the NDS: There is general continuity between the 2008 NDS and the 2005 NDS. This is an evolutionary, not revolutionary, document. It calls for a balanced approach to irregular and conventional challenges, and expresses a continuing imperative for interagency and international partner approaches to security, using hard or soft power, or both, where appropriate.

¶5. (U) Why now? This is an opportunity to reflect changes and lessons learned across DoD since 2005. Furthermore, it gathers and reinforces the priorities and direction set by the Secretary of Defense in recent speeches and internal guidance.

¶6. (U) The Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy is planning to begin briefs for defense attaches from allied and key partner nations in Washington during the week of August 18, 2008.

¶7. (U) Given its high profile nature and public release, posts may receive host nation inquiries about the NDS. PM/PPA would be happy to answer questions about the NDS or to assist posts in answering questions they receive.

¶8. (U) Department point of contact is Donna Hopkins, PM/PPA, hopkinsdl@state.gov or hopkinsdl@state.sgov.gov, 202-647-10792. DoD point of contact is James McCall, OUSDP Policy Planning, james.mccall@osd.mil or james.mccall@osd.smil.mil, 703-692-3902.

¶9. (U) Minimize considered.

RICE